

In the Specification:

Please amend paragraph 0017 as follows:

In a subsequent step 120, an etching process is started. In many applications, the etching process may be employed with or through a photoresist or other mask layer, such that the etching process is only effective to areas of etching layers that are exposed through openings in the mask layer. Moreover, as will be described below, many processes may be employed as an etching process within the scope of the present disclosure. For example, the etching process may include dry plasma etching, chemical-vapor-deposition, sputter deposition, thermal deposition, evaporation, physical vapor transport or other conventional or future-developed thin-film processes. The etching process may also include a chemical-mechanical polishing (CMP) process, wherein at least a portion of the substrate being processed and/or the CMP apparatus may include an optical path to the area being etched (or polished) that is optically transparent, at least to the irradiation employed for thickness/depth detection, as described below. Thus, it follows that the etching process initiated in the step 120 may be employed to remove portions of the layers being etched, and may also be employed to form the layers by additive etching (e.g., sputtering). However, in the interest of brevity, portions of the following discussion of the method 100 shown in Figure ~~FIGURE~~ 1 may assume the etching process initiated in the step 120 is employed to remove portions of the layers being etched. Of course, such treatment is not intended to limit any aspect of the present disclosure to employing the etching process to remove material rather than to add material.